

**Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) and
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA)
Virtual Meeting
Friday, January 15, 2021**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Commission Chair Wishart.

CSA ROLL CALL

The commission roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

CSA MEMBERS PRESENT

Dona Wishart, Mark Bomberg, William Bupp, Nancy Duncan, Walid Gammouh, Marshall Greenhut, Kathleen LaTosch, Peter Lichtenberg, Michael Pohnl, Linda Strohl, and Kristie Zamora

CSA MEMBER EXCUSED

Georgia Crawford-Cambell, Guillermo Lopez, Tene Milton-Ramsey, and Robert Schlueter

AASA STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Alexis Travis, Scott Wamsley, Brenda Ross, Kelly Cooper, Jen Hunt, Cindy Masterson, Jennifer Onwenu, and Michelle McGuire.

APPROVAL OF CSA AGENDA

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the CSA agenda with the recommendation to add meeting end times to future agendas.

A motion was made by Commissioner Duncan and Commissioner Strohl seconded motion. The agenda was approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF CSA MINUTES

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the December 18, 2020 CSA minutes without amendments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bomberg and Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

COMMISSION CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

Commissioner Wishart welcomed all to the virtual meeting, and offered the following comments:

- As we strive to strengthen the network of services to the aging and enhance communications across the network, the interest shown by those joining in this virtual meeting is appreciated. We are looking forward to the day when we can meet in person again.

- A special thanks to the Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan and members, the Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging and members, councils and commissions on aging and partner agencies for being with us.
- This has been a very busy month across Michigan – many meetings taking place across the networks on collaborative efforts that will lead to teamwork for planning and distribution of vaccines.
- Special appreciation to AASA staff Brenda Ross for continued support in meeting execution in the virtual space.
- The State Advisory Council is seeking a guest commissioner to speak at their January 21, 2021 virtual meeting. Anyone who may be interested, please email Dona today by the end of the day.
- The Advocacy Committee was developed out of a call to action several years ago. Commissioner Donna Marie Brown began chairing the committee at its inception. The leadership transitioned to Commissioner LaTosch and we are thankful for her efforts during her time serving as the committee's chair. Commissioner LaTosch was instrumental in moving the committee to action. As of this month, another transition has taken place and Commissioner Duncan is now serving as the committee chair. She will bring a keen awareness of what is necessary to work with the State Budget Office and a strong voice to advocate for funding. The Advocacy Committee did meet with the Executive Office of the Governor last week and more updates will be shared during the committee's report.
- She acknowledged the importance, value, and excellence of AASA's leadership team and all AASA staff. We benefit greatly from the work they do and guidance they provide the CSA. Thank you to all.
- We will also have the pleasure today of learning and listening to presentations on housing and equity work being done.
- Our list of informational topics is growing, and these will be prioritized against timelines with business items in the upcoming months. Commissioner Lichtenberg has requested a progress report on the PREVENT program and impacts on Elder Abuse which will be addressed. We will also be scheduling an update on the Attorney General's Elder Abuse Task Force.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATED TO AASA PROGRAMS, SERVICES, POLICIES, OR ISSUES IMPACTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Laura Nestle, with the Foster Grandparent Program serving St. Clair County, shared the following comments:

- Prior to COVID, 64-68 foster grandparents were maintained. Due to the pandemic, deaths, relocations, and retirement have reduced the number to 51 fierce volunteers ready to return to classrooms to help children.
- Five people, who impressively reached out during the pandemic wishing to serve, are on a wait list for training.
- Volunteers are currently serving 4,000+ hours either in person or virtually in classrooms. The stipends received for these hours makes a difference in many of their lives.
- In-service has been adapted with the current environment and trainings continue occurring in outdoor and parking lot settings.
- While the pandemic has slowed the work, they continue to seek alternate pathways to allow volunteers' lives to continue to be fulfilled and minds challenged by serving. This

is the passion and mission of Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and R.S.V.P. programs across the state.

- The CSA and AASA support of these programs is greatly appreciated.

Commissioner Linda Strohl provided public comment. She stated there should be clarity in defining Direct Care Workers (DCW). Her staff continues to run into roadblocks in getting vaccines locally. While she understands the supply is limited, DCWs providing care for homebound seniors should receive priority in receiving the vaccine.

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING (SAC) UPDATE REPORT

Commissioner Zamora provided an update on the work of the SAC.

- The SAC will be meeting next week on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Updates will be given by AASA staff and council members from around the state.
- Work on the 2020 draft report will continue, the topic: *Social Isolation with Emphasis on Outreach*.
- Work will begin on the 2021 charge of *Aging in Place*. Discussion will include exploring avenues to accomplish the work, and small workgroups will be created to execute the work.

CSA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Duncan provided an update on the work of the committee.

- On Monday, January 11, 2021, the following CSA representatives met with the Executive Office of the Governor members Nathan Reynolds, Public Relations and Ghida Dagher, Appointments: Chair Wishart, Commissioners LaTosch, Bomberg and herself, and Dr. Travis. Notes from the meeting were shared with the Commissioners. She highlighted the items discussed.
 - Impact of COVID-19 on seniors
 - Waitlist information
 - Direct Care Workforce and its professionalization
 - Aging in place and benefits of helping seniors stay in their own homes.
 - ✓ Desires
 - ✓ Cost-effectiveness
 - ✓ Safer due to COVID-19
 - Made a budget request for the FY 22 budget.
 - ✓ Address chronic waitlist (approximately 5,100 waiting for home-based services) requesting \$6,375 million.
 - ✓ If request is approved, clients served could increase by 20 percent.
 - If the Governor is not able to support the full request, the hope was for a “down payment” on the funds so addressing the waitlist could begin.
 - Population trends, which will be on the increase in the coming years, were addressed noting the need for long-term strategies.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES SENIOR DEPUTY REPORT

Dr. Alexis Travis provided the following updates:

- Current COVID-19 data in Michigan is as follows:
 - 576,000+ total cases
 - ✓ 135,000+ adults 60 and older (23 percent)
 - 14,5000+ deaths
 - ✓ Just under 13,000 were adults 60 and older. (89 percent)

- Continuing to collaborate strongly with Medical Services Administration (MSA) on COVID response efforts. MSA leads the effort for nursing facilities and AASA is leading the effort for home and community-based services.
- Michiganders over the age of 65 can now receive the vaccine. A frequently asked questions document specifically for older adults and caregivers is currently under review and will be released soon.
- Dr. Travis attends weekly briefings with department senior leadership. At last meeting, it was reported that the number of individuals who have received the vaccine in Michigan is currently just over 300,000.
 - Overall goal is to have over 70 percent of Michiganders vaccinated.
 - People are encouraged to call the state of Michigan 2-1-1 phone line to get information on how to obtain the vaccination.
 - Nursing home residents and caregivers are a priority.
- Current data on those recovering from the virus shows individuals experiencing anxiety and weakness.
- Premium pay for DCWs was extended in the latest COVID Relief Package from January 1 – February 28, 2021. The department supports further extension and increase in wages for DCWs.
- AASA continues working with *Bellage* on the *CV19 Checkup* tool – the online platform to help older adults do self-assessments and identify resources for needs during the pandemic.
 - Data suggests that older adults 75+ are more often engaging in unsafe behaviors, not following public health guidance.
 - Tailoring approach to communicate guidance more effectively and assisting with registration to be vaccinated in that demographic. Working to adapt the tool to assist with this as well.
 - First *Bellage* bulletin was released and features Michigan and other pioneering states.
- Large shipment of Personal Protective Equipment was delivered to AAAs recently. Shipment included N-95 masks to be used for staff, service recipients, and members of the public.
- AASA has a one-year partnership with Centers for Healthcare Strategies, which is funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. Purpose of project is to provide technical assistance with the DCW work.
 - Internal environmental/governmental scans will be conducted.
 - Series of interviews and focus group convenings with public and stakeholders.
 - Final product will be an action plan to implement to address the deficit of DCWs.
- Continuing to develop the internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan, as well as a capacity building project to develop health equity in the aging networks.
- AASA Annual Report will be submitted to the Legislature by the January 31 deadline.
- Michigan was invited to participate in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Healthy Aging Regional Meeting in February. Dr. Khaldun, Dr. Travis and Deputy Director Wamsley will attend and focus on regional development of healthy aging plans for older adults.
- Two new staff have joined the AASA team.
 - Cindy Masterson will serve as the Operations and Aging Network Support Division Director. She brings over 33 years of state government experience including work in budget and with grants.

- Jennifer Onwenu will serve as an MPHI affiliate focusing on management of special projects in the department. She previously served as an intern for AASA while receiving her master's in social work.

LEGISLATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES, AASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Jen Hunt, State Assistant Administrator, provided the following updates:

- State revenue estimating conference is taking place today which will shape the support of AASA's budget.
 - As January marks the beginning a new legislative session, any bills introduced last session not moved entirely through the process and voted into law will need to be reintroduced. Aging network background checks is legislation of interest to AASA.
- *GetSetUp* project to train older adults on technology has been well received.
 - Nearly 32,000 users on the platform.
 - Nearly 52,000 completed sessions.
 - There are users from Ironwood all the way to close to the Ohio boarder.
 - A list of the most popular classes is included with the minutes.

Jen's presentation noting user analytics and most popular classes is included with minutes.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Scott Wamsley, AASA Deputy Director, provided the following updates:

- The state budget for FY 21 is in place and is essentially flat funded from original allocation levels for FY 20.
- There is a bit more detail to the federal budget as it relates to aging programs.

A budget table was shared with commissioners and reviewed by Deputy Director Wamsley. The table is included with the minutes.

BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Request for Approval of Federal CARES Act Administrative Funding for Animatronic Pets grant to Michigan Advocacy Program (MiAP)

Michelle McGuire, AASA Departmental Specialist, provided an overview stating the grant is being expanded \$50,000 for the period January 15 through September 30, 2021. AASA has collaborated with the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to purchase approximately 1,850 animatronic pets intended to help address social isolation for residents in nursing homes and other licensed facilities dealing with social isolation. MiAP received a total of 2,319 requests for these pets. This additional funding will allow MiAP to support the purchase of approximately 469 additional pets and related costs (e.g., shipping, replacement batteries, etc.)

A motion was made by Commissioner Duncan to approve the Request for Approval of Federal CARES Act Administrative Funding for Animatronic Pets grant to Michigan Advocacy Program (MiAP). Commissioner Zamora seconded the motion.

Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 11-0-0.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Senior Housing Presentation

Lynn Hendges, Manager, MDHHS Housing and Homeless Services and Kelly Rose, Chief Housing Solutions Officer, Michigan State Housing Development Authority provided a presentation on housing services in Michigan.
The power point presentation is included with the minutes.

b. Advancing Equity through Systems Change within Michigan's Aging Network

Linda Gordon with Michigan Public Health Institute provided a presentation on the partnership project with AASA.

The power point presentation is included with the minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next *virtual* Commission on Services to the Aging meeting is tentatively scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Friday, February 19, 2021. Please note, these meetings are open to the public, and anyone wishing to attend may do so. Those needing technology assistance should contact Brenda Ross at rossb11@michigan.gov at least five days before the meeting date.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Wishart adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.